

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A portable electronic device for use in a medical monitoring system of a health care facility that generates notification messages indicating that a patient being monitored may have a condition that requires attention and wirelessly transfers  
5 the notification messages to the portable electronic device, the portable electronic device comprising:
  - an audio signal input device;
  - an audio signal output device;
  - a wireless transceiver; and
  - 10 a processing circuit configured to receive the notification messages indicating that the patient being monitored may have a condition that requires attention and to facilitate transfer of voice data to the audio signal output and from the audio signal input by way of the wireless transceiver.
2. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein both the notification  
15 messages and the voice data may be transferred by way of the wireless transceiver.
3. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein the wireless transceiver uses a cellular data protocol.
4. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein the device is configured such that if a voice communication link is established with a recipient  
20 while a notification message is being displayed, data associated with the notification message may be forwarded to the recipient.
5. The portable electronic device of claim 4, wherein the device is configured such that if a voice communication link is established with a recipient while a notification message is received, data associated with the notification message  
25 is automatically forwarded to the recipient.

6. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein the transceiver is capable of transferring voice data to an access point connected to a health care facility network.

5 7. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein the transceiver is configured such that a user may connect directly with a second portable electronic device.

8. The portable electronic device of claim 1, comprising a second wireless transceiver configured to transfer data.

10 9. The portable electronic device of claim 8, wherein the wireless transceiver uses a cellular protocol.

10. The portable electronic device of claim 8, wherein the processing circuit is further configured to facilitate transfer of voice data to the audio signal output and from the audio signal input by way of the second wireless transceiver.

11. A system for establishing voice communication in a health care facility having a monitoring system that generates notification messages indicating that a patient being monitored may have a condition that requires attention and wirelessly transfers the notification messages to portable electronic devices, the system  
5 comprising:

a portable electronic device, comprising

an audio signal input device;

an audio signal output device;

a wireless transceiver; and

10 a first processing circuit configured to receive the notification messages indicating that the patient being monitored may have a condition that requires attention and to facilitate transfer of voice data to the audio signal output and from the audio signal input by way of the wireless transceiver; and

15 a second processing circuit configured to receive voice data sent from the portable electronic device and facilitate transfer of the voice data to a recipient.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the second processing circuit is configured to facilitate transfer of the voice data to a recipient using a telephone line.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the processing circuit is configured to  
20 use a private branch exchange to facilitate transfer of the voice data to a recipient using the telephone line.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein the second processing circuit is coupled to the portable electronic device using a network of the health care facility.

15. The system of claim 11, wherein the second processing circuit is configured to receive a user input signal input by the audio signal input device and initiate a call to a particular recipient based on the audible user input signal.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein the processing circuit is configured to  
5 facilitate transfer of the voice data over a cellular network.

17. The system of claim 11, further comprising  
a second portable electronic device, comprising  
a second audio signal input device;  
a second signal output device;  
10 a second wireless transceiver; and  
a third processing circuit configured to receive the notification  
messages indicating that the patient being monitored may have a  
condition that requires attention and to facilitate transfer of voice data  
to the second audio signal output and from the second audio signal  
15 input by way of the wireless transceiver;

wherein the portable electronic device is configured to transfer voice data  
from the first electronic device directly to the second electronic device.

18. The system of claim 11, wherein one of the first processing circuit and  
the second processing circuit is configured to initiate a call to a particular recipient  
20 based on a notification message received by the portable electronic device.

19. The system of claim 11, wherein the processing circuit is configured to  
allow voice data to be transferred while data associated with a notification message is  
displayed on the portable electronic device.

20. The system of claim 11, wherein the wireless transceiver is configured  
25 to use a cellular protocol.

21. The system of claim 11, wherein a single user input received by one of a user input device of the portable electronic device and a device used by the recipient of the voice data may be used to forward, to the recipient of the voice data, physiologic data that has been received by the portable electronic device.

5           22. The system of claim 21, wherein the single user input may be used to forward data that is displayed on a display screen of the portable electronic device and data that is related to the data that is displayed on a display screen of the portable electronic device.

10           23. The system of claim 11, wherein the system is configured such that the portable electronic device may be used to one of control a wireless phone coupled to the portable electronic device and answer incoming calls of the wireless phone.

24. The system of claim 11, wherein a notification message received by the first processing circuit includes physiological data associated with the patient who may have a condition that requires attention.

25. A method to be implemented by electronic devices of a medical monitoring system of a health care facility where a patient's physiological characteristics are being monitored for conditions that may require attention by a clinician, the method comprising:

5 receiving data from a monitoring device configured to monitor a patient;

determining whether the patient has a condition that may require attention based on the data received from the monitoring device;

sending a notification message to a portable electronic device if the patient has a condition that may require attention; and

10 wirelessly transferring voice data received from the portable electronic device to a recipient.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the notification message includes physiologic data.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the physiologic data is ECG  
15 waveform data.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein receiving data from a monitoring device comprises receiving data from a central station that has received the data from the monitoring device.

29. The method of claim 25, wherein receiving data from a monitoring  
20 device comprises receiving data from a plurality of monitoring devices adapted to monitor a same patient.

30. The method of claim 25, wherein transferring voice data received from the portable electronic device to a recipient comprises transferring the voice data over a hospital network.

31. The method of claim 25, wherein transferring voice data received from the portable electronic device to a recipient comprises transferring data over a cellular network.

5 32. The method of claim 31, wherein the notification message includes physiologic data.

33. The method of claim 25, wherein transferring voice data and sending a notification message comprises transferring the voice data and sending the notification message using a same transceiver.

10 34. The method of claim 25, further comprising forwarding physiologic data to a second portable electronic device based on a user input received from the portable electronic device.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the user input is establishing a voice communication session while data associated with a notification message is displayed on the portable electronic device.

15 36. The method of claim 34, wherein the physiologic data is data associated with a notification message being displayed on the portable electronic device.

20 37. The method of claim 25, wherein transferring voice data received from the portable electronic device to a recipient comprises identifying the recipient based on a user audio input received by the portable electronic device.

38. The method of claim 25, further comprising transferring voice data using a wired connection to the portable electronic device.

39. The method of claim 25, wherein data based an analysis of physiological data received from the patient is sent with the notification message.

40. A method to be implemented by electronic devices of a medical monitoring system of a health care facility where a patient's physiological characteristics are being monitored for conditions that may require attention by a clinician, the method comprising:

5 receiving data from a monitoring device configured to monitor a patient;

determining whether the patient has a condition that may require attention based on the data received from the monitoring device;

wirelessly sending a notification message to a first portable electronic device if a patient has a condition that may require attention, the notification message  
10 including physiologic data;

wirelessly sending a notification message to a second portable electronic device if a patient has a condition that may require attention, the notification message including physiologic data;

forwarding data to the second portable electronic device based on a user input  
15 received from a user input device of one of the first portable electronic device and the second portable electronic device, the data that is forwarded being data associated with a notification message being displayed on the portable electronic device; and

transferring voice data received from one of the first portable electronic device and the second portable electronic device to the other of the first portable electronic  
20 device and the second portable electronic device;

wherein transferring voice data comprises transferring the voice data using one of

a network of the health care facility;

a direct wireless connection between the first portable  
25 electronic device and the second portable electronic device; and



a cellular network.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the notification message includes ECG waveform data.

42. The method of claim 40, wherein wirelessly sending a notification  
5 message to a second portable electronic device, forwarding data to the second portable electronic device, and transferring voice data comprises sending the notification message, forwarding the data, and transferring the voice data using a single transceiver of the second portable electronic device.